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JOHN FISKE





THE OLD SOUTH DURING THE SIEGE OF BOSTON, 1776.

POEMS
OF
THE "OLD SOUTH"

BY
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES,
JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER, JULIA WARD HOWE,
EDWARD EVERETT HALE, AND
JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

Illustrated



BOSTON
WILLIAM F. GILL & CO

1877

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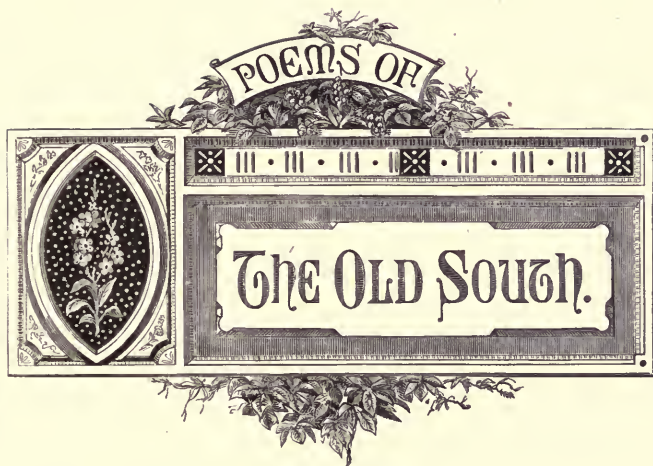
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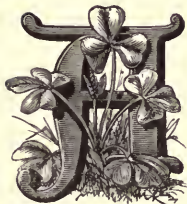


A BALLAD OF THE FRENCH FLEET.

OCTOBER, 1746.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

MR. THOMAS PRINCE *loquitur*.



FLEET with flags arrayed

Sailed from the port of Brest,
And the Admiral's ship displayed

The signal: "Steer south-west."

For this Admiral d'Anville

Had sworn by cross and crown
To ravage with fire and steel
Our helpless Boston Town.

Poems of the Old South.

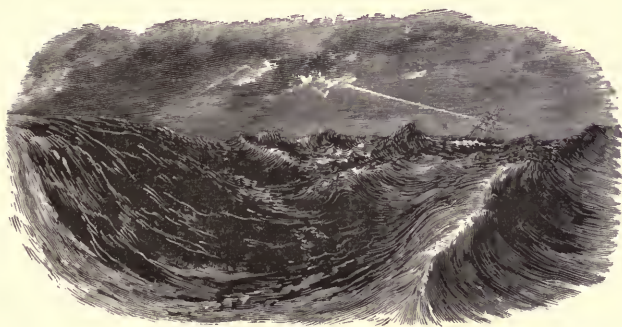
There were rumors in the street,
In the houses there was fear
Of the coming of the fleet,
And the danger hovering near;
And while from mouth to mouth
Spread the tidings of dismay,
I stood in the Old South,
Saying humbly: "Let us pray."

"O Lord! we would not advise;
But if, in thy providence,
A tempest should arise
To drive the French fleet hence,
And scatter it far and wide,
Or sink it in the sea,
We should be satisfied,
And thine the glory be."

A Ballad of the French Fleet.

5

This was the prayer I made,
For my soul was all on flame;
And even as I prayed
The answering tempest came.
It came with a mighty power,
Shaking the windows and walls,
And tolling the bell in the tower
As it tolls at funerals.



The lightning suddenly
 Unsheathed its flaming sword,
And I cried: "Stand still and see
 The salvation of the Lord!"
The heavens were black with cloud,
 The sea was white with hail,
And ever more fierce and loud
 Blew the October gale.

The fleet it overtook,
 And the broad sails in the van
Like the tents of Cushan shook,
 Or the curtains of Midian.
Down on the reeling decks
 Crashed the o'erwhelming seas;
Ah, never were there wrecks
 So pitiful as these!

Like a potter's vessel broke
The great ships of the line;
They were carried away as a smoke,
Or sank like lead in the brine.
O Lord! before thy path
They vanished and ceased to be,
When thou didst walk in wrath
With thine horses through the sea!



THE BRAVE OLD SOUTH.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

“While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall.”



NINE seven-score years our city's pride—
The comely Southern spire—
Has cast its shadow, and defied
The storm, the foe, the fire;
Sad is the sight our eyes behold;
Woe to the three-hilled town
When through the land the tale is told,—
“The brave ‘Old South’ is down!”

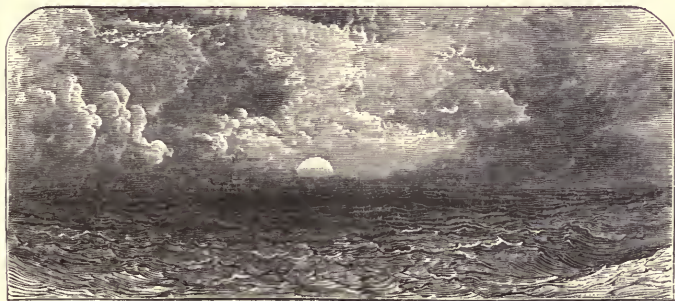
Let shadows blot the starless dawn
That hears our children tell,
“Here rose the walls, now wrecked and gone,
Our fathers loved so well;
Here, while his brethren stood aloof,
The herald's blast was blown
That shook St. Stephen's pillared roof,
And wrecked King George's throne!



“The home-bound wanderer of the main
Looked from his deck afar,
To where the gilded, glittering vane
Shone like the evening star,
And pilgrim feet from every clime
The floor with reverence trod,
Where holy memories made sublime
The shrine of Freedom’s God!”

The darkened skies, alas! have seen
Our monarch tree laid low,
And spread in ruins o’er the green,—
But Nature struck the blow;
No scheming thrift its downfall planned,
It felt no edge of steel,
No soulless hireling raised his hand
The deadly stroke to deal.

In bridal garlands, pale and mute,
Still pleads the storied tower;
These are the blossoms, but the fruit
Awaits the golden shower;
The spire still greets the morning sun,—
Say, shall it stand or fall?
Help, ere the spoiler has begun!
Help, each, and God help all!



THE OLD SOUTH.

JULIA WARD HOWE.



TWO hands the God of nature gave,
One swift to smite, one fond to save,
Betwixt the cradle and the grave.

Where Strength hews out his stony stint,
Where woods are felled and metals blent,
The right hand measures his content.

Where Skill sits tireless at her loom,
Where Beauty wafts her transient bloom,
The tender, saving hand has room.



And Fate, as in a tourney fine,
The differing powers doth match and join,
That each may wear the crown divine.

But manhood, in his zeal and haste,
Leaves cruel overthrow and waste
Upon his pathway roughly traced.

Then woman comes with patient hand,
With loving heart of high command,
To save the councils of the land.

Round this old church, so poor to see,
Record of years that swiftly flee,
She draws the chain of sympathy.

The men who make their gold their weal,
Who guard with powder and with steel,
Have not a weapon she can feel.

Before the venerable pile,
Armed with a reason and a smile,
She stations, with benignant wile.

Like Barbara Frietchie, in her day,
She has a royal will to say,
"You shall not tear one stone away.

“You disavow the spirit need,
That avarice may build with heed
The gilded monuments of greed.”

What hope, what help compatriots know?
Only this counter mandate slow,
The mothers will not have it so.

Mothers! the wrongs of ages wait!
Amend them, ministers of fate!
Redeem the Church, reform the State!



IN THE OLD SOUTH CHURCH.

BOSTON, 1677.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.



HE came and stood in the Old South
Church,

A wonder and a sign,
With a look the old-time sibyls
wore,

Half-crazed and half-divine.

Save the mournful sackcloth about her wound,
Unclothed as the primal mother,
With limbs that trembled, and eyes that blazed
With a fire she dare not smother.

Loose on her shoulder fell her hair,
With sprinkled ashes gray;
She stood in the broad aisle, strange and weird
As a soul at the judgment-day.

And the minister paused in his sermon's midst,
And the people held their breath,
For these were the words the maiden said.
Through lips as pale as death:—

“Thus saith the Lord: ‘With equal feet
All men my courts shall tread,
And priest and ruler no more shall eat
My people up like bread!’

“Repent, repent!—ere the Lord shall speak
In thunder, and breaking seals!
Let all souls worship him in the way
His light within reveals!”



She shook the dust from her naked feet,
And her sackcloth closely drew,
And into the porch of the awe-hushed church
She passed like a ghost from view.

They whipped her away at the tail o' the cart;
 (Small blame to the angry town!)
But the words she uttered that day nor fire
 Could burn nor water drown.

For now the aisles of the ancient church
 By equal feet are trod;
And the bell that swings in its belfry rings
 Freedom to worship God!

And now, whenever a wrong is done,
 It thrills the conscious walls;
The stone from the basement cries aloud,
 And the beam from the timber calls!

There are steeple-houses on every hand
 And pulpits that bless and ban;
And the Lord will not grudge the single church
 That is set apart for man.

For in two commandments are all the law
And the prophets under the sun;
And the first is last, and the last is first,
And the twain are verily one.

So long as Boston shall Boston be,
And her bay-tides rise and fall,
Shall freedom stand in the Old South Church,
And plead for the rights of all!



THE OLD SOUTH MEETING- HOUSE.

BY EDWARD EVERETT HALE.



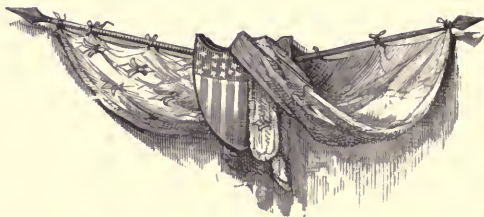
O hide the time-stains on our wall,
Let every tattered banner fall!
The Bourbon lilies, green and old,
That flaunted once, in burnished gold;
The oriflamme of France that fell
That day when sunburned Pepperell
His shotted salvos fired so well,
The Fleur de Lys trailed sulky down,
And Louisburg was George's town.
The Bourbon yields it, in despair,
To Saxon arm and Pilgrim prayer.

Hang there the Lion and the Tower,
The trophies of an earlier hour,
Pale emblems of Castilian pride,
That shrouded Winslow when he died
Beneath Jamaica's palm.
Hang there, and there, the dusty rags
Which once were jaunty battle-flags,
And, for a week, in triumph vain,
Gay flaunted over blue Champlain,
Gayly had circled half the world,
Until they drooped, disgraced and furled,
That day the Hampshire line
Stood to its arms at dress parade,
Beneath the Stars and Stripes arrayed,
And Massachusetts Pine,
To see the great atonement made
By Riedesel and Burgoyne.



Eagles which Cæsar's hand had fed,
Banners which Charlemagne had led
 A thousand years before,
A dozing empire meanly gave
To be the eagles of a slave,
And let the mean Elector wave
 Those banners on our shore.

The mean Elector basely sold
Eagle and flag for George's gold;
And, in the storm of war,
In crash of battle, thick and dark,
Beneath the rifle-shot of Stark,
The war-worn staff, the crest of gold,



The scutcheon proud and storied fold,
In surges of defeat were rolled!
So even Roman banners fall
To screen the time-stains on our walls!
Beneath the war-flag's faded fold
I see our sovereigns of old
On magic canvas there.

The tired face of "baby Charles"
Looks sadly down from Pilgrim walls,
Half pride and half despair,
Doubtful to flatter or to strike,
To cozen or to dare.
His steel-clad charger he bestrides,
As if to smite the Ironsides,
When Rupert with his squadron rides;
Yet such his gloomy brow and eye,
You wonder if he will not try
Once more the magic of a lie
To lift him from his care.

Hold still your truncheon! If it moves,
The ire of Cromwell's rage it braves!
For the next picture shows
The grim Protector on his steed,
Ready to pray, to strike, to lead,

Dare all for England, which he saves,
New England, which he loves.

These are Vandycks. 'Tis Kneller there
Has pictured a more peaceful pair:
There Orange gives his last command,
The charter gives to Mather's hand;
And, blooming there, the queenly she,
Who takes, "now counsel, and now tea,"
Confounding Blenheim and Bohea,
Careless of war's alarm,
Yet, as of old the virgin Queen,
When armed for victory, might press
The smoky fire-lock of "Brown Bess,"
So Anna, in a fond caress,
Rests on a black "Queen's arm."

Beneath those forms another band,
Silent but eloquent, shall stand.

There is no uttered voice nor speech
As still of liberty they teach;
No language and no sound is heard,
Yet still the everlasting word
Goes forth to thrill the land.
Story and Greenough shall compel
The silent marble forms to tell



The lesson that they told so well—
Lessons of Fate and Awe;
Franklin still point the common place
Of Liberty and Law.
Adams shall look in Otis' face,
Blazing with Freedom's soul,
And Molyneux see Hancock trace
The fatal word which frees a race,
There, in New England's well-earned place,
The head of Freedom's roll.

These are not all. The past is gone,
But other victories shall be won,
For which the time-worn tale we read
Is but the sowing of the seed.
The harvest shall be gathered when
Our children's children meet again
Upon this time-worn floor;

When ruddy drops flush living cheek,
And tribunes of the people speak
As living man can speak to living men;
When future Adamses conspire;
When other Danas feed the fire,—
Each grandson worthy of his sire;
When other Phillipses shall tell
Again the tale *he* tells so well;
When other Minots shall record
The victories of some other Ward,
And other Prescotts tell the story
Of other Warrens' death and glory;
When, in some crisis of the land,
Some other Quincy takes the stand,
To teach, to quicken, to command,—
To speak with prophet's power
Of Liberty and Law combined,
Of Justice close with Mercy joined,

United in one heart and mind:
That talisman of victory find
In which our laurels all are twined;
And, for one struggle more,
Forget our things which lie behind
And reach to those before!



THE "OLD SOUTH" SPEAKS.

BY JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.



AM a building old and famous,
Which every Boston boy can see,
The Old South Meeting-House my name is,
That no one else shall take from me.
If any other church has reckoned
To carve my name upon its stone,
Let that be "Old South Church the Second,"
Or "Old South, Junior," till I'm gone.

'Tis true I'm old and somewhat lonely,
My dear companions mostly fled;
Of all I knew King's Chapel only,
Still lifts in peace her old gray head.

In our accordant bells, the story
Of foeman strife sounds far away;
I was a Whig and she a Tory,—
But we forget all that to-day.

Sometimes it may have been vexatious
The Governor and suite to see
Go *there* from out his palace spacious,
Instead of coming *here*, to me.
And then, when Andros seized our meeting,
And brought his prayer-books, as you know,—
No matter! — all these griefs are fleeting;
And that was settled, long ago.

As business life around us hardens,
Before it, taste and memories bow;
Those grand old homesteads and their gardens,
We've no such buildings[!] left us now!

The Province-house was banished lately,
That shops might stand in lengthened row,—
But how I miss that mansion stately,
Its courts, its Indian with his bow!

Dear Paddock's elms! my friends archaic,
Horse-railroads brought you to your 'doom;
The City Fathers, too prosaic,
Destroyed you in your summer bloom.
I heard with grief, Improvement summon
Old Brattle-church its square to flee;
I look in vain across the Common,—
The Hancock House no more I see.

All human things are evanescent;
Old Boston now is nearly gone;
And yet it would be very pleasant
To see the Twentieth Century born,—

To be the link, together keeping
Three centuries with one life instilled,
Down time's majestic stream still sweeping,—
An ark, with sacred memories filled.

So sacred! is there aught surrounding
Our lives like that great Past behind,
Where Courage, Freedom, Faith, abounding,
One mighty cord of honor twined?—
A cord no rushing years can sever,
So long as, looking up to me,
Floating around my walls forever,
Those pure Ideals all shall see.

But when your children tire of keeping
The landmarks of their fathers' day,—
Forget the ashes 'round them sleeping,
And cast their sacred shrines away,—

Let monuments of peace and war go,
Keep only Cotton, Leather, Pork;—
Boston will be a poor Chicago,
Or else a miniature New York.

My time-stained walls the crosses cover,
Of well-spent years the living proof;
The ghosts of patriots 'round me hover
Whose voices rang beneath my roof.
Though prouder domes are elsewhere swelling,
And loftier spires salute the morn,
Let Boston save the plain old dwelling
Where Freedom for mankind was born.



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Poems of the "Old
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